



2003 Legislative Session UPDATE

Senator Larry Sheahan ■ 9th Legislative District

Committee Assignments:

- Majority Floor Leader
- Ways & Means
- Rules
- Agriculture
- Parks, Fish & Wildlife,
Vice-chairman

Keep in Touch

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Dear Friends and Neighbors,

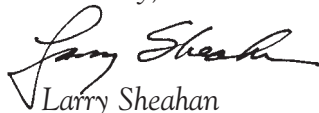
Senate Republicans entered the 2003-04 legislative session as the majority party in the Washington State Senate, meaning we have control over the issues and priorities of the Senate this year.

As leaders in the Senate, we're facing a budget shortfall of as much as \$2.4 billion — but we are ready to step up to that challenge. This will be a session of opportunities as we work to continue to provide the most valuable government services to our citizens while finding ways to cut spending in less crucial areas.

With Washington near the top of the nation in unemployment, our number one priority will be improving our economy and creating jobs to help the people of our state get back to work. Washington has tremendous potential to return to the vibrant economy of just a few years ago. We want to do all we can to help the employers and employees of our state succeed.

As Majority Floor Leader, I'm excited to have an opportunity to help fill the leadership void our state has been facing over the past several years. In order to do this, I need to hear your voice. Please feel free to contact my office in Olympia via the toll-free legislative hotline at 1-800-562-6000.

Sincerely,


Larry Sheahan
9th District Senator

Remembering the Heroes on the Columbia Shuttle

The recent Columbia Shuttle disaster has saddened us all. In memory of those fallen, the Senate heard a special resolution I drafted to commemorate and remember those who lost their lives and their families. Michael Anderson was special to us in Eastern Washington. Even though Anderson

was not born and raised in Washington, we considered him a native. He graduated from Cheney High School, earned a degree from the University of Washington, and was stationed at Fairchild Air Force Base. In 1994, Anderson was selected by NASA to become an astronaut.

His parents continue to live in the Spokane area. We will miss Michael Anderson, his commitment to the community and his vision.

He lived by his motto — Whatever you want to do in life, you're training for it now.

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WSU Vet funding lost

As a Washington State University alum, I feel a special need to maintain the excellent standard WSU has set in the area of veterinary medicine. At the moment, WSU's College of Veterinary Medicine is in danger of losing a needed funding source.

Twenty-three years ago, WSU entered into a veterinary medicine agreement with Oregon State University. OSU would send vet students every fall to attend the veterinary medicine program at WSU. The program allowed OSU to offer a vet program and at the same time provided needed funding to WSU. Without OSU's money, the College of Veterinary Medicine will face a \$2.4 million deficit in its budget.



WSU is known around the world for its vet program, and I intend to help keep that reputation alive. I am working with WSU and other key individuals to find a solution to this funding problem. Two possible funding solutions would be to either coordinate a special vet endowment with vet graduates or to reduce government management positions in Olympia and divert the funds to WSU. Cougar pride is alive and well in Olympia, and we will overcome this obstacle.

Save our Parks

Lyons Ferry, Central Ferry, Chief Timothy and Crow Butte state parks are scheduled for closure. As the vice chair of the Senate Parks, Fish and Wildlife Committee, I have sponsored a bill that would create a special parking pass for the Lewis and Clark bicentennial. All proceeds from the pass would go directly to these four parks. We are also looking at future funding sources to keep these special parks open.

In addition to the parks, the new committee assignment will allow me to focus on protecting our state dams and increasing the number of fish in our water system. We need to foster cooperation between government and the private sector to work together toward environmentally balanced solutions. One way we can do this is by making reasoned choices about growth, water and the envi-

ronment, using sound science. For example, we could provide funding for increased water storage. This approach will increase our chances of having enough water for farmers, cities and fish.



Picture taken at Lyon's Ferry State Park

Restoring the Economy

As Washington continues to work its way out of one of the worst recessions to hit our nation since the early 1980s, Senate Republicans are committed to supporting new policies to help both employers and employees succeed.

Every priority we consider will be measured against its potential to create jobs or improve our economy.

We'll also be working to address some of the barriers to economic success in our state, including the rate increases in the workers' compensation program, inequities in the unemployment insurance system, and costly rules and regulations that increase paperwork and inconvenience without improving the workplace or the environment.

Families in Washington used to be able to brag about the tremendous quality of life they enjoy in our state. It's time to make sure the economic environment is just as attractive as our natural environment.

Budget Fixes

One of the major issues legislators will have to face in the next legislative session is our state budget. If you have to balance your checkbook every month, government should do the same. We owe it to Washington's families and their children.

I believe responsible spending should be a fundamental principle for state government. We want to pass a budget that only uses ongoing revenues to meet its expenditures instead of using one-time money to fill the hole, like the tobacco securitization. We can't spend more money than we take in.

We also want our taxpayers to get the biggest bang for their buck. Texas

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and Florida use a system that ties budget money to specific outcomes or performance-based budgeting. These two states have found that this method increases accountability because it requires state agencies to show the results of their programs and services.

Protecting the Agricultural Economy

We all have been shocked and dismayed by the precipitous drop in the price of wheat over the last few months. I have sponsored Senate Joint Memorial 8015 to support Congressmen Nethercutt and Hastings in their efforts to find out if any marketing policies of the federal government are to blame. If the answer is yes, we need to get those policies changed.

In recent years, wheat prices have been at or below the cost of produc-

tion, so farmers are sensitive to government wheat sales that affect the supply and demand of wheat.

Washington state is the third highest state to produce wheat. With over 5,000 farmers, Washington generates approximately 150 million bushels of wheat annually on 2.5 million acres of farmland. Washington's gross wheat sales are about \$450 million. We export about 90 percent of our wheat, and it is one of our most important cash crops.

Farmers Need Diesel Tax Exemption

Once again, the transportation budget writers in the House are threatening to remove our tax exemption for the off-road use of diesel. I will do everything in my power to maintain this vital exemption for our farmers.

The fuel tax rate in Washington is about 23 cents per gallon. Farmers pay no fuel tax on dyed diesel, but they do pay sales tax of about 9 cents per gallon. The impact of this increase on the average farmer would be immense.

For example, let's assume an average 2,000-acre farm uses 3.5 gallons of diesel per acre per year based on a three-year crop rotation. This tax increase would cost the farmer at least \$980 extra per year. This is a substantial increase that most farmers simply

cannot afford in today's agricultural market.

Washington State's 18th amendment requires that most fuel taxes collected be used for roads and bridges. Farmers should not be forced to pay road taxes on equipment that rarely uses the road.

EASTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Eastern Washington University to Expand High-Tech Jobs Program

One of the most important capital budget projects I am working on is the expansion of Cheney Hall on the Eastern Washington University campus.

A new Cheney Hall will allow EWU to expand programs for students interested in careers in the high-tech sector. The demand for these types of jobs is very high in the state of Washington. For example, Washington-based computer and data processing jobs are expected to grow to 82,300 in 2005, and then to 99,200 in 2010, from an estimated 68,600 in 2000 — an overall growth rate of about 3.7 percent.

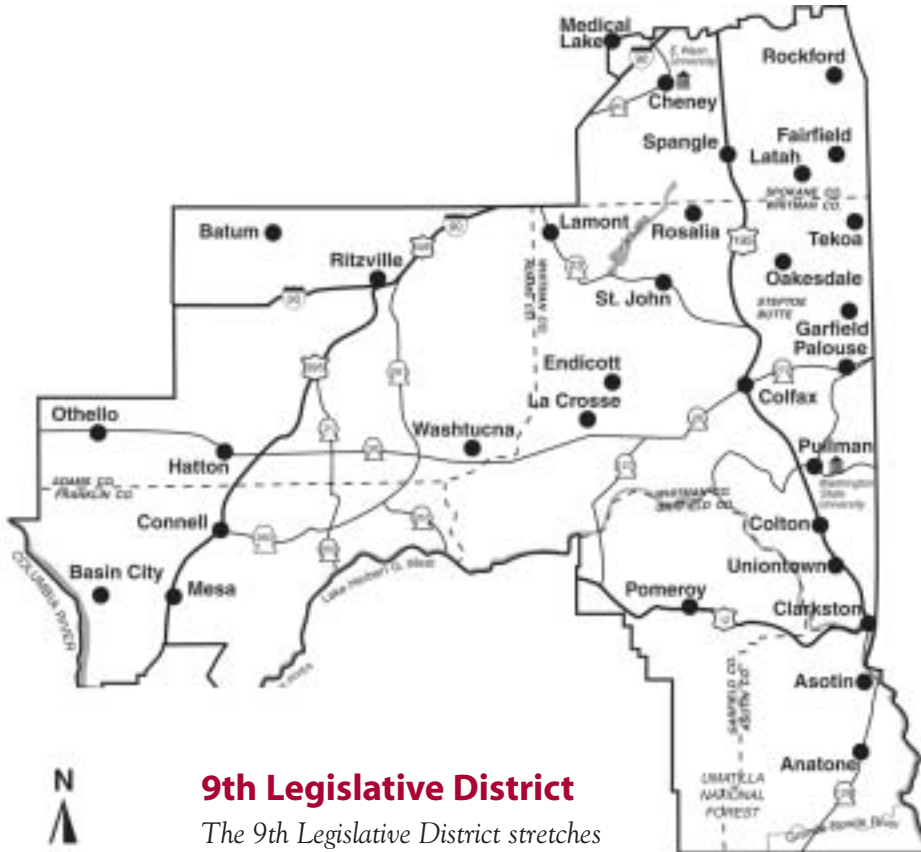
The Milken Institute issued a 1999 report entitled, "America's High-Tech Economy." The report found that "research centers and institutions are undisputedly the most important factor in incubating high-tech industry." We need to invest today in our higher education facilities to prepare for a better tomorrow.



Sen. Sheahan was elected majority floor leader by the Senate Republican Caucus. In addition to this key leadership position, Sheahan serves on Rules and the budget-writing Ways and Means Committee. His other assignments include both the Agriculture and the Parks, Fish and Wildlife committees.

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The 9th Legislative District stretches from Spokane to the Oregon border.

Recently, I sent out the 2002 Government Guide and inadvertently omitted the telephone numbers and addresses for the mayor's office in the Cities of Pullman and Pomeroy. I also left out the information about the West Plains Chamber of Commerce. We apologize for the omission and have included it here for your information.

Sen. Larry Sheahan

Pullman

325 SE Paradise Street
Pullman, WA 99163
509-338-3208

Pomeroy

80 N 7th Street
Pomeroy, WA 99347
509-843-1661

West Plains Chamber of Commerce

201 First Street
Cheney, WA 99004
509-235-8480

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